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11 September 1958

Copy No. C 59

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 36
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
DATE ASSIGNED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS, S, C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: 3/27/84
DATE REVIEWER:

DIA and DOS review(s)
completed.

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Approved For Release 2002/08/16 : CIA-RDP79T00975A003900360001-9

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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DAILY BRIEF

25X1 I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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OK USSR: The aircraft sighted on a Moscow factory air-field on 27 August appears to be a modified delta-wing four-jet bomber. Performance data for this prototype has not yet been determined, but its design suggests that it may be capable of supersonic flight.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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OK Morocco: A reshuffle of the government seems probable in the near future. Likely head for the new regime would be 38-year-old Abderrahim Bouabid, dynamic vice premier and minister of economy. Such a government would probably be somewhat more stable than the present moderate Balafrej cabinet, but would adopt a firmer position in its negotiations with the US over base rights.

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III. THE WEST

OK France-Morocco: The French foreign minister on 9 September said that if the US accedes to Moroccan demands for recognition of the principle of eventual evacuation of American bases in Morocco, then France's base negotiations on Bizerte, as well as on its Moroccan bases, would be seriously prejudiced. Paris has been seeking to evade decision on this issue, probably to avoid provoking a hostile reaction from European settlers in Algeria, but eventually it is likely to accept the recommendations of its Rabat embassy to evacuate all French forces from Morocco.

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DAILY BRIEF

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61< Venezuela: The abortive military coup of 7 September and the general strike of 8 September called to demand punishment of the coup leaders have produced a tense political situation. Both military and civilian groups are said to be dissatisfied with the junta's handling of the crisis, and irresponsible elements of either could provoke a long-pending showdown. The junta's ability to mediate between these two basically hostile forces appears to be declining.

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DAILY BRIEF

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New Soviet Bomber Observed at Aircraft Plant at
Moscow/Fili

A large, new Soviet jet bomber was sighted on the factory airfield at Moscow/Fili on 27 August. The new aircraft was observed outside the plant which has been producing the BISON heavy jet bombers. There have been indications during the past 12 months that a new aircraft might be under development at this plant; BISON production has been erratic and dwindling, and increased activity--including night work--was noted in that portion of the plant which is believed to be the design bureau.

From study [redacted] of the new aircraft, it appears to be a modified delta-wing, four-jet bomber, probably equipped with dual-tandem landing gear and outriggers at the wing tips. Landing gear of a similar type is employed on the BISON, BLOWLAMP, and FLASHLIGHT.

Two very large engines are located at the wing tips and two more are underslung on pylons. These engines appear to be conventional turbojets. No evidence of an afterburner is visible [redacted] but an afterburner section could be there. The engines are probably larger than those of the BADGER and the BISON and when heard and observed in operation gave the impression of large mass air flow. The wing span is variously estimated at from "80 plus" to 96 feet. The fuselage has been estimated by the US air attaché in Moscow to be at least 170 feet in length.

Preliminary analysis of the general configuration of this aircraft suggests that it was designed for high speed and perhaps has a supersonic capability. The wings are decidedly swept back and thin, the fuselage is reported to be extremely long and thin, and the engines are mounted at points advantageous to high-speed flight. More precise analysis to determine the weight, size, and estimated performance characteristics of this prototype is being undertaken [redacted]

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Impending Reorganization of the Moroccan Government

A reshuffle of the Moroccan Government seems probable in the near future, but King Mohamed V, [redacted]

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[redacted] is not likely to abdicate. The King and moderates within the dominant Istiqlal party, which has majority representation in the present Balafrej government, have recently taken steps to strengthen their positions. Nevertheless, a new government may be created by 38-year-old Abderrahim Botiabid, the dynamic vice premier and minister of national economy, only representative of the neutralist left wing of Istiqlal now in the government.

A Bouabid government would probably be more effective, but it would also be more pan-Arab and more inclined to cooperate with the Communist bloc than the Balafrej cabinet, which itself recently agreed to exchange diplomatic representatives with the USSR, moved toward recognition of Communist China, and sought membership in the Arab League. A Bouabid regime would probably also take a firmer stand in negotiations with the US over base rights.

Meanwhile, a concerted campaign is under way to rally the Moroccan population around the monarchy to offset the recent growth of pro-republic sentiment. [redacted]

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III. THE WEST

France Opposes US Recognition of Principle of Evacuation In Morocco

French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville emphasized to Ambassador Houghton on 9 September that French-American relations would be "very bad" if the US acceded to Moroccan demands to recognize publicly the principle of total evacuation of American bases in Morocco. He said any such announcement would have "serious repercussions" on the French-Moroccan base negotiations which have been under way since March and on the coming French-Tunisian negotiations on the future of the Bizerte base.

Morocco's demand for public recognition of the principle of evacuation has become the principal stumbling block in French-Moroccan negotiations of a new military agreement. The French Embassy in Rabat has recommended that France accede, which it probably will do eventually. France originally proposed reducing its ground troops and installations while continuing to retain control of four air and naval training bases. It has been trying to maintain this position because of pressure from the French military and the fear of provoking a hostile reaction among the European settlers in Algeria, particularly during the campaign for a heavy vote in the 28 September constitutional referendum. Paris would have to accede almost immediately if the US announced its agreement to the principle of evacuation.

Tension in Venezuela

The abortive Venezuelan military coup on 7 September and the general strike of 8 September, in which the Communists were particularly active, have apparently created an explosive atmosphere, although surface calm prevails in most of the country. According to the US service attachés, there is general dissatisfaction with the junta's attempt to meet the demands of civilian strikers. Military units remain on alert status, probably because of the threat of civilian violence which has already erupted in one provincial port city.

Provocative action by either military or civilian elements could touch off the long-pending showdown between these two forces over control of government. The junta is probably losing its ability to mediate between them. Civilians, some of whom are armed, are well organized to meet the threat of a military coup, as demonstrated in effective general strikes on 8 September and 23 July. They may now seek to extend their recent political victories over the military by demanding widespread reprisals for the coup or increased controls over the armed forces.

The divided armed forces have largely supported the junta thus far, but public opinion has tended to consider the military as a whole responsible for recent plotting. The armed forces' leaders may no longer tolerate additional political reverses, and could accept the challenge of civilian groups in a showdown of force or attempted take-over of the government, particularly if the junta becomes a captive of mob action. Any showdown is likely to be a bloody one, and would probably augment existing anti-American feeling among powerful leftist groups.

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